UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Distr. : GENERAL

E/ECA/ATRCW/ARCC.X/89/6
20 March 1989

Original : ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Tenth Meeting of the Africa Regional
Coordinating Committee for the Integration
of Women in Development

23 - 25 March 1989
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

LC/RAIRCBL

CHANGING SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITION OF WOMEN IN AFRICA IN THE CONTEXT OF THE NAIROBI FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES

SUMMARY

Since the Nairobi Conference (July 1985) and the adoption of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies by the United Nations General Assembly, the world and the African region in particular has witnessed an unprecedented increase in activities for and involving women.

As a follow-up to the first report on the "Changing socio-economic conditions of women in Africa" presented to the ECA Conference of Ministers, the present report reviews and highlights activities undertaken since April 1988. In this respect, activities undertaken and projects being implemented by United Nations agencies at national, subregional and regional levels have been reviewed. Issues in the context of structural adjustment policies and their impact on women have been discussed.

The role and the contribution of the ECA African Training and Research Centre for Women (ATRCW) has been discussed along with major activities undertaken since 1988. Based on ECA missions and information made available by member States in responding to ECA's questionnaire, major activities and policy measures established at the national level have been reviewed in detail.

As regards sectoral analysis, the paper has focused on employment, education and training, law and legislation, and women at the decision-making level. In brief, the review shows that there has been an increase in the number of women in formal employment and in the services sector in particular. In education, enrolment of girls at all levels of the school system has increased except in the science-based training programmes where there are fewer girls than boys. At the decision-making level, the number of women in key positions in both the private and public sector has increased.

Problems and constraints faced in the implementation of the Strategies have been pointed out. They include structure, and lack of human and financial resources, information and data. Finally, recommendations have been advanced for consideration.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The United Nations Decade for Women, 1975-1985, served as a catalyst in focusing attention on women's issues. The Decade for Women ended in July 1985 with two world conferences in Nairobi, Kenya - one convened by non-governmental organizations, the other convened by the United Nations for its Member States. And while a decade of international attention to and acknowledgement of the plight and potential of women world-wide has not resulted in substantial changes in the economic, political and social conditions of women, it has had other important results. Women's projects, programmes, organizations, campaigns and a wide range of initiatives have come about.

2. Since the 1985 World Conference, and in an effort to implement the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 40/108 of 13 December 1985, the world and the African region in particular have witnessed an unprecedented increase of activities for and involving women.

3. This paper is a follow-up to the report presented last year (document E/ECA/CM.14/17) on the "Changing socio-economic conditions of women in Africa in the context of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies". The paper reviewed and highlighted programmes and activities undertaken within the United Nations system and by member States to implement the Strategies in order to bring about changes in the economic, political and social conditions of women.

4. Taking into consideration the activities reviewed in last year's report, the present report will review the various activities undertaken by member States, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations since the last meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers in Niamey, the Niger in April 1988. It will also review and highlight the activities of other United Nations agencies not included in the last year's report. In addition, the report gives attention to the impact of the economic crisis on women, women in the informal sector and analyses the responses to the ECA/ATRCW questionnaire sent to member States in December 1987.

5. The report is therefore presented as follows: part II reviews activities undertaken by various United Nations agencies and governments at national, subregional and regional levels; part III looks at the economic crisis and its impact on women; part IV reviews activities undertaken in various sectors such as education and training, employment, the informal sector and women at the decision-making level; and part V highlights problems/constraints, advances recommendations for consideration and draws conclusions.

II. ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES AND MEMBER STATES

A. United Nations agencies

6. According to the report of an ECA mission to Egypt, 1/ the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is currently sponsoring two projects on women both of which are being implemented by the Department of Women's Affairs in the Egyptian Ministry of Social Affairs. One of the projects concerns the training of rural women in population and development with the aim of improving their socio-economic level. This is basically an income-generating programme involving training through extension service projects such as education, family planning, literacy classes, etc., while the other project is aimed at strengthening the institutional capacity of the Department of Women's Affairs. The long-term objective is to establish the Department as one of the principal organs in policy-making, planning, monitoring and co-ordinating women's affairs with a view to promoting the role and status of Egyptian women in line with the national policy goals of the country.

7. Similar activities focusing on income-generation for rural women in particular are being undertaken in Egypt by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The overall objective of the agencies' activities in Egypt is to raise the socio-economic standard of the rural population, particularly women.

8. Information made available during an ECA mission to Botswana in September 1988 shows that such agencies as UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Food Programme (WFP) have given support to women's programmes. For instance, UNICEF supported a national workshop on gender responsive planning and the project cycle which was organized in September 1988 by the Women's Affairs Unit in the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. It was also revealed during the mission that because the majority of female-headed households in Botswana are poor, UNICEF was currently conducting a mid-term review to identify strategies for securing household income. 2/

9. The Inter-agency Women In Development (WID) Group, composed of all United Nations agencies in Ethiopia (including ATRCW), has reviewed activities and research studies undertaken in the country and prepared a report which elaborates in detail programmes and strategies for WID in Ethiopia. The Group also held a workshop on women in development for representatives of United Nations agencies in Ethiopia. The workshop, whose objectives were to undertake gender analyses, to explain the relevance of gender analysis to the work of the participants and to define WID priorities for Ethiopia, was sponsored by UNDP and held in Addis Ababa in October 1988. At the beginning of December 1988, UNICEF also sponsored a national workshop in Ethiopia, similar to the one held in Botswana on gender responsive planning.

10. The Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies emphasized the need for women's involvement in new and renewable sources of energy (NRSE) planning and projects. Special incentives were recommended to enable women to obtain education and technical training relevant to their role as key producers, 3/ users and managers of energy sources. In line with the recommendations of the Strategies, the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement for Women (INSTRAW) initiated in 1987 a project on the promotion of women's involvement in NRSE in Africa. The preparatory phase has involved a survey of NRSE use in the six selected African countries, namely Ghana, Malawi, Zambia, Cameroon, Guinea and Mali. The survey determined the extent of energy consumption by women and types of fuel sources and activities linked to the collection and use of fuel. Surveys of women's organizations, their potential involvement in NRSE projects and the degree of political support have also been completed.

11. The new orientation towards NRSE demands that women be informed, educated and trained in order to be able to participate adequately in the process of technological change now taking place in the energy sector. This will enhance the status of women, increase their participation in general socio-economic development, and improve the rural environment. INSTRAW is committed to these goals and its activities in NRSE are having an impact on a number of countries in Africa in which INSTRAW is involved.

12. INSTRAW has also produced an information booklet entitled "Improved stoves, an integral part of energy-saving strategies" geared towards household energy needs.

13. FAO has also been involved in energy for women's income-generating activities. For instance, FAO has implemented a fish-smoking project in Ghana with the co-operation of the National Council of Women. The device used in this project reduces fuelwood consumption, improves the quality of the smoked fish and ameliorates working conditions and decreases the quantity of smoke inhaled by women workers.

14. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and UNICEF have also been involved in the dissemination of this technology to Togo, Benin and Guinea where women have been trained as trainers and extension workers to teach other women how to use and maintain the new device.

15. Focus on women is a critical dimension of the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD). The Fund's basic approach in this area has been to emphasize the role of women as producers rather than just as consumers of social services. With this in view, the Fund has endeavoured to improve the access of women to inputs and services which would raise their productivity. In this connection, an increasing share of IFAD projects and share of resource allocation under each project is directed towards women. Secondly, steps have been taken to increase the allocation of credit facilities to women so that they can better their own farms and productive activities. The Fund's projects with focus on women have been and are currently being undertaken in Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Djibouti, Malawi, Morocco, the Niger, Nigeria, the Sudan, Tunisia, Uganda, Zaire, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

16. ATRCW has made a viable contribution to the Women in Development (WID) programmes in the region. Its principal activities include, among others, promotion of women in small-scale enterprises with particular emphasis on improving the managerial capabilities of women, enhancing the role of women in the informal sector and access of women to scientific and technical fields; monitoring changes in the situation of African women in the context of the Forward-Looking Strategies; sectoral analysis of emerging socio-economic trends and their impact on African women, in particular, the effect of persistent famine and drought on women as food producers and structural adjustment programmes; enhancing the capacity of national machineries to incorporate gender issues in national development plans/strategies to promote the establishment of a national trust fund for women.

17. In line with the above principal activities, and within the framework of the ECA 1988-1989 work programme, ATRCW has undertaken the following activities since April 1988: two studies in the informal sector and agro-industries financed by the Ford Foundation were undertaken in May-July 1988. The study in the informal sector, undertaken in Kenya, Swaziland, Zambia and Mauritius, was aimed at assessing the status of women in the sector, identifying factors hampering women's participation and looking at support measures being provided by governments to enhance women's activities in the sector. The study identified research gaps, problems and constraints in the sector.

18. The study in agro-industries covered the United Republic of Tanzania, Botswana, Lesotho and Zimbabwe. Its aim was to establish the extent of women's participation in agro-industries; identify factors hindering their participation; and survey current trends regarding women's involvement in agro-industrial production and marketing. The study identified research gaps, training needs and provided strategies for enhancing women's participation in agro-industries. As a follow-up to these studies, ATRCW has organized and is launching its first research competition for women researchers in Eastern and Southern Africa. The objective of the research competition which is being funded by the Ford Foundation, is to give women the opportunity to carry out research to improve their skills.

19. Paragraph 223 of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies states in part that "... increased opportunities and encouragement should be given to women to study science, mathematics and engineering at the university level and for girls to study mathematics and science at the pre-university level". 5/ In line with the Strategies, ATRCW commissioned three case studies on women and scientific professions in Africa. The studies, financed by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), were undertaken in Kenya, Sierra Leone and Swaziland. They have revealed the low level of enrolment of women/girls in the science-based training programmes as well as the low level representation of women in science-based professions.

20. Development planning has failed to recognize fully or systematically the contribution of women in the development process or, in turn, the effect of this process on them. 6/ In an effort to promote and ensure that women's concerns are taken into account in national development plans, ATRCW organized in November 1988 an expert group meeting on the guidelines for the incorporation of women's concerns in national development plans. Women, who constitute 50 per cent of the human population, have usually been overlooked in planning for development, in that they have not been viewed as direct agents and beneficiaries of the development process.

21. As part of society, women need to be viewed in the context of development planning if their socio-economic conditions are to be improved, and if they are to effectively participate in attaining the goals of development. The meeting, therefore, reviewed development planning both in economic and equity matters and the extent to which women's concerns have been taken into consideration in national development plans. Three major areas of concern for effective integration of gender concerns in development planning and policy were discussed and established: the awareness and commitment of key policy makers and planners to gender equality and gender responsive planning at all levels; the establishment of institutional structures for gender responsive planning and implementation; and the establishment of statistical data bases and information that provide gender disaggregated data. 7/

22. The report of this meeting will be used to prepare technical guidelines for the incorporation of women's concerns in national development plans to be published this year (1989). The publication will be disseminated to appropriate national structures for their use in advocating the incorporation of women's concerns in national development plans.

23. A subregional seminar on Measures to improve women's management skills, also organized by ATRCW, was held in Douala, Cameroon in November/December 1988. The seminar, which was supported by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), was targeted to women in the French-speaking countries. Earlier, a similar seminar was conducted for English-speaking African countries in January/February 1987. The objectives of the seminar were, among others, to strengthen women's management capabilities and promote small- and medium-scale enterprises and projects for women; and to improve the technical competencies of women in order to ensure viability of their work in enterprises and projects. The seminar was successful in formulating recommendations and strategies for future management training programmes for women.

24. Two missions which were undertaken to Botswana and Egypt in September/October 1988 aimed at reviewing and monitoring the implementation of the Arusha and Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies. Information collected during the missions is reflected throughout this report.

B. Member States

25. In December 1987, ATRCW sent to member States a questionnaire entitled "Changing socio-economic conditions of women in Africa in the context of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women". The questionnaire was and is intended to give a comparative assessment of the situation of women in the African region, giving attention to areas such as women in agriculture, employment, education and training, industry, research and communications; policy measures and women at the decision-making level. To date, only eight member States have responded to the questionnaire, five from French-speaking and three from English-speaking African countries.

26. Based on the responses received so far regarding the ATRCW questionnaire and on the missions undertaken, the following paragraphs provide an analysis of the activities member States have undertaken (at the national level) to implement the Strategies in order to promote and improve the socio-economic conditions of women.

(a) Botswana

27. Following the Nairobi Conference in July 1985, the Government of Botswana has increasingly recognized the significant countribution of women to the development of the country. This is evidenced by its efforts to strengthen the Women's Affairs Unit and giving financial and technical support to women's projects. Through the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, incentives in the form of financial assistance are being provided to women engaged in income-generating activities. The Ministry's Central Statistical Office has in its 1985 country profile provided information on women in development in Botswana.

28. In August/September 1988, the Women's Affairs Unit drafted a document on national policy on women in development to be submitted to the Cabinet and eventually to Parliament for adoption. If adopted, the document will serve as a blueprint for all governmental and non-governmental action towards enhancing the participation of women in national development.

29. In September 1988, the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs, through its Women's Affairs Unit, organized and conducted a two week intensive workshop on gender responsive planning and the project cycle. The objective of the workshop was to enhance the planning and programmatic skills of all district and council planning officers and the staff of the Women's Affairs Unit. A national conference on women in development policy and the Forward-Looking Strategies was held in October 1988 to look into the Strategies specific to the Botswana reality. Income-generating activities at the grass-roots level in the rural areas are being undertaken by various non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The University of Botswana and the National Institute of Development Research and Documentation have undertaken research on income-generation for women, sex differences in education, etc.

(b) Egypt

30. In Egypt, like Botswana and other countries, the Department of Women's Affairs is located in the Ministry of Social Affairs with an adviser to the Department attached to the Ministry. The department is currently involved in income-generating activities supported by UNICEF, ILO and other government bilateral agencies. Activities are basically geared towards the improvement of the living conditions of rural women. There is no national policy on women in development to effectively implement women's programmes. Most of the programmes are services to rural women and nothing much is being done for urban women.

31. The Department is working towards the realization of the Strategies through projects initiated with the support of United Nations agencies such as UNFPA and UNICEF.

(c) Kenya

32. The Government of Kenya recognizes the vital role women play in national development and also acknowledges that, with the necessary support, women could play an even greater role in overall national development. To this end, the Government has created the necessary climate and machinery to enable women to participate fully in development and has instituted policies and programmes which place women at the centre of development. The entire nation has been sensitized on the crucial role of women in development.

33. The Women's Bureau (created in 1976) within the Ministry of Culture and Social Services has the following structural units through which its objectives are realized: administration, research development, small-scale industries, business and appropriate technology, training, planning, agricultural projects, communication and information and non-governmental organizations. In addition to the Women's Bureau, there are currently 35 non-governmental organizations in Kenya.

34. Following the 1985 World Conference and as a result of the Government's continued support to the Women's Bureau and the increased number of women's groups/organizations, the women's programme has expanded tremendously.

35. The following goals, among others, have been achieved:

(a) Promoting awareness of issues affecting women among policy makers and planners;

(b) Establishment and promotion of income-generating activities for women;

(c) Production of bibliography on women of Kenya;

(d) Production of a booklet: Women of Kenya: Review and Evaluation of Progress;

(e) Implementation of women's group leaders training needs assessment survey; and

(f) Establishment of five income-generating pilot projects.

36. Government support to the Women's Bureau in direct support of women activities rose from a mere KSh 8,400 (0.54 per cent of the recurrent budget of the Ministry of Culture and Social Services) in 1975/1976, to KSh 1,285,700 (11.64 per cent) in 1984/1985. 8/

(d) Swaziland

37. Though the establishment of the Directorate for Women's Affairs in Swaziland has been approved by the Government, it is not yet functioning. Women's issues are currently being dealt with by different ministries which are being encouraged to extensively integrate women's issues into their programmes and projects. There is no national machinery to co-ordinate women's activities at the national level. An overall policy statement has not yet been announced by the Government.

38. Swaziland has not yet signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women due to some conflicts of customary law particularly to articles 2(f), 3,5(a), 9(i) and (2), 13(a) and (b), 14(29) 15, 16(1c), (1d), (1e), (1f), (1g), and (1h). 9/

39. Support/resources have only been provided by non-governmental organizations in the formal and informal sectors to enable women to participate in the mainstream of development. The University of Swaziland's Social Science Research Unit is currently collecting up-to-date information on the integration of women, women and the law, women and employment, and women and education.

40. In general, in the absence of a national policy and national machinery, nothing much has been or is being done in Swaziland to implement the Strategies.

(e) United Republic of Tanzania

41. The national machinery is located in the Ministry of Community Development, Culture, Youth and Sports. Since 1985, endless efforts have been made to provide essential inputs into women's income generating and social activities in order to raise their income and to improve their living standards. Government ministries, parastatals and non-governmental organizations have been striving hard to provide economic and social inputs to help women's groups as part of their contribution towards the implementation of the Strategies.

42. The Ministry of Education has strengthened the home economics post-literacy work-oriented centres by earmarking 900 centres which are being rehabilitated and re-innovated by the district funds and equipped by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). The 1985 World Conference has ushered women's issues into a new era. Many government and non-governmental sectors have initiated a large number of women's projects, most of which are jointly financed by international donors and the Tanzanian Government. Various international organizations such as UNICEF, the Norwegian Agency for Development (NORAD), the Finnish International Development Agency (FINNIDA), the Danish Development Agency (DANIDA), the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), UNIFEM, WFP, ILO, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), OXFAM, etc., have provided financial assistance and equipment to run women's projects.

43. Such assistance is channelled through government bodies to ensure effective monitoring and co-ordination. For example, through the Ministry of Community Development, Culture, Youth and Sports, the following projects were launched in 1988:

(a) Women's Appropriate Food Technology (WAFT) by UNIFEM, UNICEF and MCDOYS;

(b) Credit scheme for underpriviledged women of urban and rural areas, financed by UNIFEM and MCDOYS;

(c) Mbeya grinding mill pilot project launched by DANIDA and the Ministry of Community Development, Culture, Youth and Sports;

(d) Immunization programme launched in 1986 by UNICEF, the Ministry of Community Development, Culture, Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Health;

(e) Training fund for Tanzanian women launched in April 1988 by CIDA; and

(f) Women development project in the Sisal Estates launched by WFP during the second half of 1988. 10/

44. There are many other projects which have been financed through such other ministries as Health, Water, Agriculture, the Prime Ministers' Office, and through other organizations.

(f) Cameroon

45. In order to carry out the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women beyond the Decade itself, the Government of Cameroon established in 1984 the "Ministère de la condition féminine" (Ministry for Women's Affairs) which co-ordinates and monitors specific issues related to the status and advancement of women in the country. To assist the Ministry, a consultative committee on the advancement of women was set up in 1984.

46. Since the 1985 World Conference, the Ministry has established development strategies based on the Forward-Looking Strategies. These strategies and/or measures have made it possible to put into effect a Cameroonian concept of the advancement of women. Three objectives have been defined in relation to this concept:

(a) To lay down and give legal backing to policies on the advancement of women, by the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and by guaranteeing equality of men and women in the political, economic, social and cultural fields;

(b) To promote income-generating activities;

(c) To draw up and implement programmes and projects which would facilitate the integration of women in economic activities and thereby ensure their effective participation in national development; and

(d) To ensure that the greater proportion of available manpower is mobilized for development. In this respect, it is intended to give priority to the role of women in the sixth Economic, Social and Cultural Plan of Cameroon. This implies improving the status of women and finding ways and means for their total integration in development. In this regard, some 15 projects are to be carried out on a priority basis during the current five-year period. 11/

(g) Senegal

47. In Senegal, a commission has been set up within the Ministry of Planning and Co-operation on "Women in economic and social development". The commission, whose task is to prepare all the sectoral commissions' projects and measures designed to promote the advancement of women, carries out its functions under the national planning commission.

48. Within the Department of Women's Affairs, there is a female employment division responsible for working towards the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women; studying problems relating to female employment and their impact on the situation of women; and studying measures for protecting working women and ensuring that regulations are applied. A priority programme has also been launched by the Government to lighten housework by identifying ways to improve conditions. This is seen as a prerequisite for promoting unpaid income-generating activities.

49. Equipment designed to lighten housework has been provided for 470 groups. In terms of structure, the Department of Women's Affairs has organized women's groups into a National Federation of Women's Groups.

(h) Niger

50. In order to effectively implement the Nairobi Strategies, the Government has established within the Ministry for Public Health and Social Affairs a national secretariat in charge of the status of women. The secretariat works in close collaboration with the Niger Women's Association (Association des femmes du Niger). With the support of the Government and UNIFEM, the Association is charged with the responsibility of designing and implementing projects in various fields aimed at improving the socio-economic conditions of women.

51. For instance, within the framework of the Strategies, a number of measures and projects have been introduced and initiated in areas such as health, agriculture and education. Various means of lightening household jobs have also been initiated, such as the use of grinding mills, introduction of carts, off-season crops cultivation aimed at ensuring food self-sufficiency and the fight against malnutrition, reafforestation and land reclamation to combat desertification. An ad hoc commission has also been established to assist in the drawing up of certain laws such as family law and law concerning rural areas. 13/

52. In general, the countries reviewed above give an indication that efforts are being made by some governments to implement the Strategies. However, it is too early to measure the impact these programmes have had on women in terms of their socio-economic status. One of the major reasons is the absence of and/or inadequate information and data to assess the impact of WID programmes on their contribution to national development and the extent to which the socio-economic conditions of women have changed and/or are changing.

C. At the subregional/regional levels

53. Following the Nairobi Conference, a number of women's groups have emerged at national, subregional and regional levels. Such existing groups are involved in various activities for the integration of women in development.

54. The West African Women's Association (WAWA) which was established in 1987 held a meeting in Dakar, Senegal in October 1988. The Association's principal objective is to bring together women of West African States for the promotion of women in the development process. The meeting was attended by 14 of the 16 member States, namely Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo. Other organizations attending the meeting included the African Development Bank (ADB), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Pan-African Women Association (PAWO), INSTRAW and the Organisation des femmes entrepreneurs et commerçantes de l'Afrique de l'ouest (OFECAO). The meeting defined priority

areas for WAWA which include, among others, to sensitize member States, non-governmental organizations and international organizations whose assistance is required for the implementation of the WAWA programme, and to work out training and research programmes with special emphasis on training rural women and women at decision-making levels.

55. Similar organizations, associations and activities with a view to improve and promote the advancement of women in the development process within the context of the Strategies have been initiated in other African subregions. For instance, the UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States and European Programmes, in collaboration with the Arab League, is planning a major Arab regional conference to be held some time in 1989 on the changing roles, responsibilities and contribution of women to national development throughout the region.

56. In spite of the current situation of the Women in Development (WID) programmes at the ECA/MULPOCs, the Subregional Committees continue to maintain the momentum on women's programmes by holding their regular meetings and presenting their reports to the MULPOC Councils of Ministers meetings.

III. THE IMPACT OF ECONOMIC CRISIS/STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT ON WOMEN

57. "The efforts of many countries to implement the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women were undermined by a series of grave economic crises that have had severe repercussions, especially for many developing countries. The worsening of the social situation in many parts of the world, particularly in Africa, as a result of the disruptive consequences of the economic crisis, had a great negative impact on the process of effective and equal integration of women in development." 14/

58. The consequences in the third world are grave: the burden on women is increasing instead of decreasing, infant mortality is rising, more and more babies are born underweight, and women are working harder than ever in order to keep life going. Structural adjustment policies are gender biased since they ignore the unpaid labour of women. 15/ The fact is that unpaid labour in villages and families is the final lifeline for people all over the world when macro-economic measures do not work or may even collapse.

59. At present, self-initiated activities are experiencing a remarkable revival and developing into a new wave of economic activity in a number of developing countries, most of these activities such as those in the informal sector are being initiated and developed by women.

60. Looking into the impact, policies and prospects on women and the economic crisis, the United Nations Office at Vienna Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs Branch for the Advancement of Women held an Interregional seminar on women and the economic crisis in October 1988. It was attended by 25 countries (including five from Africa, namely Botswana, Nigeria, Egypt, Senegal and the United Republic of Tanzania), United Nations agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The objective of the seminar was to arouse the awareness of governments, public decision-makers and international bodies to the existence of the problems

that have come about as a consequence of the economic crisis; to consider the future orientation of research on the effects of the crisis on women, and policies that could be incorporated in the framework of the overall policies and a comprehensive analysis.

61. Women's access to education, employment opportunities and women's health issues in the context of the economic crisis were considered. It was established that as a result of the increase in global and female unemployment in most countries, women have increasingly joined the informal sector to compensate for declining family income. In general, the meeting established that the economic shocks have led to the deterioration of the situation of women and their standard of living, and that various dimensions of the conditions of women at the national level have been affected by changes in the overall economic situation. The number of women-headed housholds has also increased in both urban and rural areas.

62. Case studies on the impact of economic crisis on women were presented. According to the Nigerian experience, 16/ the economic crisis and structural adjustment programme has implied grave hardships for women. Many industries and the Government itself have had to retrench workers, mainly at the lower levels where women form significant numbers. The economic crisis has resulted in the reduction of real income for women and their households.

63. As a result of the partial removal of the oil subsidy, a measure designed to reduce public expenditure on non-productive sectors, in addition to the effect of the drastic reduction in the value of exchange of the Nigerian currency, food prices for consumers have increased. This has adversely affected the nutritional and health conditions of women and their children.

64. Realizing the need to give special attention to the present undesirable condition of women, the Federal Ministry responsible for women's affairs has formulated a national policy for the development of women, the objectives of which are the eradication of illiteracy among women, promotion of functional education, encouragement of political and civic awareness, elimination of all cultural practices that create obstacles for women, and provision of employment opportunities, etc.

65. In spite of the consequences structural adjustment measures and their implementation have had on women, empirical data and careful analysis of the impact on women in developing countries has hardly been mentioned. Similarly, women's concerns in economic analysis have been neglected in a number of studies.

66. According to Richard Jolly, 17/ the main reason for this neglect is that the economics of recession and adjustment in the 1980s has been a specialist economic topic, for the most part tackled by economists and financial policy makers within a frame of thinking and analysis which traditionally makes no direct reference to the human situation of the people involved. Studies on women have tended to focus on the longer-term trends in the position of women but have neglected how these trends have been affected by the sharp shift from economic growth, however inadequate, to economic stagnation and decline. 18/

67. Empirical studies on the changes in the social, economic and cultural status of women in the course of adjustment are needed. Similarly, household and other statistical surveys that contain data, disaggregated by sex on topics such as household income by source, access to public services, change in consumer prices, etc., have to be developed and implemented.

68. In general, while having a negative impact on women in many respects, the economic crisis provides an opportunity for - indeed forces - the rethinking of approaches to development. Solving the negative consequences for women and improving the well-being of all people in society - men and women - can be achieved if the full potential of women to contribute to the development process can be encouraged by the policies adopted by governments. The emphasis is not on the negative aspects of the current crisis but on the prospect that carefully articulated improvements in policies that can lead to an increase in the quality of the society and in national income. The Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies is an important instrument to be used as a guideline on women's issues in all spheres of development and in formulating policies, strategies and research activities relative to the current economic crisis and its structural adjustment programmes. Problems emerging from the crisis require a long-term perspective and policies which fall within the kinds of strategies clearly set out in the Forward-Looking Strategies.

69. To review further the activities undertaken and being initiated to implement the Strategies in order to bring about changes in the socio-economic conditions of women in Africa, the following part of the report will provide a sectoral analysis of the activities and changes taking place.

IV. SECTORAL ANALYSIS

A. Employment

70. With the changing perception of the role of women in connection with various socio-economic developments over the decade, and particularly as a result of their dramatic increased participation in the labour market, more concerted efforts have been undertaken by governments and international organizations to guarantee respect for the principle of non-discrimination in all areas of employment, training and working conditions.

71. Since 1985, most governments have taken minimal measures to create job opportunities for women in the formal sector because of the effect of structural adjustment policies to reduce workers in the public sector in order to curb inflation and other economic factors. In Senegal, recent measures established include full salary (to working mothers) during maternity leave and the national employment fund which is responsible for rehabilitation and placement of women in jobs.

72. At the decision-making level, there has been an increase in the number of women holding decision-making/key positions in the public and private sector. Table 7 gives an indication of this trend.

73. In the services sector, there is a marked improvement in female employment in most African countries eventhough the proportion of women professionals has increased less rapidly than that of men. Table 2 on the economically active population in the services sector (1981-1987) shows that in Algeria, Cape Verde, Egypt, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritius and Seychelles, more than 50 per cent of the economically active population is female. By comparison, tables 1, 2 and 3 on the economically active population (female): sectoral distribution in agriculture, services and industry (1981-1987) respectively, show that the participation of women in Africa as a whole is highest in agriculture and lowest in industry. However, the situation varies from subregion to subregion and from country to country within the subregions. For example, table 3 shows that women in North Africa are more economically active in the industrial sector (e.g., Tunisia and Morocco) than women in Central Africa.

74. According to research (research on women and scientific professionals in Africa) recently undertaken in Swaziland and Sierra Leone, it was found that within the major and larger industrial establishments there are very few women employed as professionals in scientific and technical areas.

75. Employment in the informal sector continues to play a key role and a hope for survival for a greater majority of women and the urban poor. According to a recent issue of UNDP News (August 1988), 19/ women in Zambia account for 65 per cent ownership and 55 per cent employment in the informal, small-scale enterprise sector. In many countries, particularly in West Africa, a great number of women are involved in the informal sector, usually in small-scale projects.

76. INSTRAW's programme on women in the informal sector attempts to devise ways of measuring women's activities in this area. An accurate evaluation of the activities of women in the informal sector will improve the overall measurement of their participation in the labour force, reveal the hidden or underestimated unemployment of women, and throw light on their contribution to the national economic product. 20/ INSTRAW is organizing a meeting in 1989 to examine the impact of macro-economic policy on women in the informal sector.

77. As mentioned earlier, ATRCW has initiated and is implementing a UNDP-funded project in the informal sector in Zambia, the Gambia, the Congo and Burkina Faso. National workshops in these countries and seminars at subregional and regional levels will be conducted in 1989 and 1990.

78. In general, although many countries (such as Senegal, Egypt, Cameroon and Botswana to mention just a few) have initiated and are involved in income-generating activities, e.g., handicrafts, gardening, textiles, etc., but many of these projects are centred on charitable activities. Projects in the informal sector should prove themselves more viable, economically sound and self-supporting. In some instances, it has been reported that women who own businesses are confronted with numerous economic constraints which reduce the viability of their business.

Table 1. ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION: SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION - FEMALE AGRICULTURE (in percentage)

Subregion, country	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
NORTH AFRICA	43.85	43.10	42.35	41.70	41.10	40.35	39.65
Algeria	9.95	9.45	8.90	8.40	7.90	7.40	6.90
Egypt	18.95	18.25	17.70	17.10	16.60	16.15	15.55
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	38.20	36.55	34.85	33.20	31.50	30.95	30.50
Morocco	34.65	34.30	33.95	33.65	33.40	32.75	32.10
Sudan	86.40	85.70	85.05	84.35	83.75	82.80	82.05
Tunisia	31.75	30.40	29.10	27.75	26.40	25.60	24.80
WEST AFRICA	73.45	73.10	72.70	72.40	72.05	71.75	71.25
Benin	73.60	72.80	71.85	71.15	70.35	69.35	68.50
Burkina Faso	86.10	85.95	85.75	85.55	85.30	85.05	84.80
Cape Verde	30.00	29.05	28.15	27.25	25.70	25.00	24.30
Côte d'Ivoire	74.45	73.85	73.30	72.75	72.30	71.70	71.15
Gambia	92.85	92.65	92.50	92.30	92.20	91.95	91.70
Ghana	51.55	51.00	50.45	49.90	49.40	48.80	48.25
Guinea	87.60	86.95	86.45	85.80	85.10	84.45	83.75
Guinea-Bissau	91.75	91.55	91.40	91.20	91.05	90.90	90.75
Liberia	85.60	85.00	84.00	83.45	82.55	82.05	81.55
Mali	78.15	77.85	77.65	77.40	77.05	76.65	76.40
Mauritania	86.30	85.95	85.55	85.20	84.90	84.30	83.80
Niger	93.95	93.65	93.45	93.15	92.90	92.70	92.55
Nigeria	68.80	68.55	68.30	68.10	67.90	67.60	67.25
Senegal	89.70	89.45	89.20	89.00	88.70	88.60	88.35
Sierra Leone	81.50	81.05	80.55	80.15	79.60	79.15	78.75
Togo	67.35	66.95	66.50	66.15	65.90	65.45	65.20
CENTRAL AFRICA	91.05	90.85	90.65	90.50	90.25	90.05	89.80
Burundi	97.85	97.85	97.80	97.80	97.80	97.80	97.80
Cameroon	77.45	77.00	76.45	76.05	75.55	75.00	74.35
Central African Republic	74.25	73.90	73.15	72.80	72.25	71.85	71.30
Chad	86.65	86.40	86.00	85.70	85.35	85.05	84.70
Congo	85.95	85.75	85.25	85.10	84.60	84.15	83.40
Equatorial Guinea	84.90	84.35	83.75	83.20	82.60	82.65	81.45
Gabon	87.40	86.75	86.15	85.50	84.90	84.30	83.65
Rwanda	97.90	97.90	97.85	97.85	97.80	97.70	97.60
Sao Tomé and Principe	76.80	76.05	75.30	74.55	73.80	73.05	72.30
Zaire	94.55	94.40	94.20	94.00	93.90	93.70	93.50

Table 1 (cont'd)

Subregion, country	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA	89.75	88.35	88.00	87.65	87.30	86.95	86.55
Angola	88.95	88.70	88.50	88.25	88.00	87.65	87.30
Botswana	84.95	84.20	83.40	82.65	81.90	81.00	80.15
Comoros	87.20	86.80	86.40	86.05	85.70	85.10	84.55
Djibouti	88.10	87.85	87.55	87.25	87.00	86.70	86.45
Ethiopia	84.55	84.15	83.75	83.35	82.90	82.50	82.05
Kenya	85.80	85.50	84.90	84.50	84.10	83.65	83.10
Lesotho	88.95	88.40	87.85	87.30	86.75	86.05	85.35
Madagascar	93.20	92.70	92.50	92.20	91.80	91.25	90.75
Malawi	93.65	93.35	93.00	92.75	92.45	92.20	91.75
Mauritius	30.20	29.45	28.65	27.90	27.10	26.45	25.80
Mozambique	97.00	96.95	96.90	96.85	96.80	96.75	96.70
Seychelles	7.10	7.10	7.10	7.10	7.10	7.15	7.15
Somalia	89.00	88.65	88.20	87.85	87.40	86.65	86.15
Swaziland	82.15	81.75	81.45	81.10	80.75	80.25	79.70
Tanzania, United Republic of	91.50	91.15	90.80	90.45	90.15	89.85	89.45
Uganda	88.10	87.50	86.90	86.30	85.80	85.35	84.80
Zambia	87.55	86.35	85.15	83.95	82.75	82.50	82.30
Zimbabwe	81.75	81.50	81.20	80.95	80.65	80.40	80.05
TOTAL AFRICA	80.75	80.25	79.85	79.45	79.05	78.65	78.15

Source: ECA secretariat.

Table 2. ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION: SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION - FEMALE SERVICES (in percentage)

Subregion, country	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
NORTH AFRICA	35.15	35.55	35.95	36.25	36.50	37.00	37.45
Algeria	67.85	68.05	68.30	68.45	68.65	68.85	69.05
Egypt	63.85	64.20	64.40	64.65	64.80	64.95	65.25
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	48.25	49.55	50.90	52.20	53.55	53.70	53.85
Morocco	31.15	31.30	31.50	31.65	31.75	32.00	32.25
Sudan	9.50	10.00	10.45	10.95	11.35	12.05	12.50
Tunisia	22.50	22.85	23.25	23.75	24.50	24.75	24.95
WEST AFRICA	20.40	20.60	20.85	21.05	21.30	21.50	21.90
Benin	23.00	23.75	24.55	25.20	25.85	26.70	27.45
Burkina Faso	10.35	10.45	10.60	10.70	10.90	11.10	11.30
Cape Verde	47.90	48.70	49.40	50.15	51.50	52.05	52.55
Côte d'Ivoire	20.45	20.95	21.30	21.80	22.15	22.60	23.05
Gambia	4.85	5.05	5.15	5.30	5.40	5.60	5.80
Ghana	32.30	32.65	33.00	33.40	33.70	34.05	34.45
Guinea	7.15	7.50	7.80	8.20	8.60	8.90	9.25
Guinea-Bissau	6.55	6.65	6.70	6.80	6.85	6.95	7.05
Liberia	12.85	13.40	14.35	14.85	15.70	16.15	16.60
Mali	18.40	18.65	18.80	19.00	19.30	19.65	19.85
Mauritania	10.35	10.50	10.70	10.80	10.85	11.20	11.55
Niger	5.90	6.20	6.40	6.65	6.90	7.10	7.25
Nigeria	24.40	24.55	24.65	24.75	24.85	25.05	25.35
Senegal	7.95	8.15	8.35	8.50	8.70	8.80	9.00
Sierra Leone	14.80	15.15	15.55	15.80	16.25	16.60	16.90
Togo	25.20	25.50	25.85	26.10	26.25	26.65	26.85
CENTRAL AFRICA	7.25	7.40	7.55	7.65	7.90	8.05	8.25
Burundi	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.10
Cameroon	19.35	19.60	20.00	20.20	20.50	20.80	21.30
Central African Republic	22.15	22.45	23.15	23.45	23.90	24.20	24.60
Chad	12.25	12.45	12.75	13.00	13.30	13.55	13.85
Congo	12.30	12.45	12.85	12.95	13.35	13.70	14.30
Equatorial Guinea	12.25	12.65	13.05	13.45	13.85	14.25	14.65
Gabon	10.05	10.60	11.10	11.55	11.95	12.40	12.95
Rwanda	1.45	1.45	1.45	1.45	1.50	1.50	1.55
Sao Tomé and Principe	19.40	20.05	20.65	21.30	21.90	22.55	23.15
Zaire	3.95	4.05	4.25	4.40	4.45	4.60	4.75

Table 2 (cont'd)

Subregion, country	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA	8.20	8.55	8.80	9.05	9.30	9.55	9.85
Angola	9.40	9.65	9.80	10.05	10.25	10.55	10.85
Botswana	12.95	13.60	14.15	14.75	15.30	16.00	16.65
Comoros	10.10	10.60	11.15	11.65	12.10	12.80	13.45
Djibouti	9.70	10.05	10.40	10.85	11.15	11.45	11.75
Ethiopia	9.10	9.30	9.45	9.65	9.85	10.00	10.25
Kenya	11.40	11.55	12.10	12.40	12.70	13.05	13.45
Lesotho	9.00	9.45	9.90	10.35	10.80	11.30	11.75
Madagascar	5.05	5.30	5.60	5.80	6.15	6.55	6.95
Malawi	4.00	4.15	4.30	4.40	4.50	4.60	4.85
Mauritius	56.70	57.35	58.00	58.65	59.35	59.85	60.30
Mozambique	2.20	2.20	2.25	2.30	2.30	2.35	2.40
Seychelles	85.05	84.00	82.90	81.85	80.75	79.70	78.60
Somalia	9.25	9.65	10.10	10.50	10.95	11.70	12.25
Swaziland	14.45	14.65	14.80	15.00	15.20	15.55	15.95
Tanzania, United Republic of	6.85	7.25	7.70	8.10	8.55	8.85	9.30
Uganda	9.85	10.35	10.80	11.30	11.65	12.00	12.40
Zambia	9.70	10.85	12.05	13.20	14.40	14.60	14.75
Zimbabwe	14.65	14.80	15.05	15.20	15.45	15.65	15.90
TOTAL AFRICA	14.15	14.50	15.05	15.05	15.35	15.60	15.95

Source: ECA secretariat.

Table 3. ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION: SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION - FEMALE INDUSTRY (in percentage)

Subregion, country	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
NORTH AFRICA	21.00	21.35	21.70	22.05	22.40	22.65	22.90
Algeria	22.20	22.50	22.80	23.15	23.45	23.75	24.05
Egypt	17.20	17.55	17.90	18.25	18.60	18.90	19.20
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	13.55	13.90	14.25	14.60	14.95	15.35	15.65
Morocco	34.20	34.40	34.55	34.70	34.85	35.25	35.65
Sudan	4.10	4.30	4.50	4.70	4.90	5.15	5.45
Tunisia	45.75	46.75	47.65	48.50	49.10	49.65	50.25
WEST AFRICA	6.15	6.30	6.40	6.55	6.65	6.75	6.85
Benin	3.40	3.45	3.60	3.65	3.80	3.95	4.05
Burkina Faso	3.55	3.60	3.65	3.75	3.80	3.85	3.90
Cape Verde	22.10	22.25	22.45	22.60	22.80	22.95	23.15
Côte d'Ivoire	5.10	5.20	5.40	5.45	5.55	5.70	5.80
Gambia	2.30	2.30	2.35	2.35	2.40	2.45	2.50
Ghana	16.15	16.35	16.55	16.70	16.90	17.15	17.30
Guinea	5.25	5.55	5.75	6.00	6.30	6.65	7.00
Guinea-Bissau	1.70	1.80	1.90	2.00	2.10	2.15	2.20
Liberia	1.55	1.60	1.65	1.70	1.75	1.80	1.85
Mali	3.45	3.50	3.55	3.60	3.65	3.70	3.75
Mauritania	3.35	3.55	3.75	4.00	4.35	4.50	4.65
Niger	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20
Nigeria	6.80	6.90	7.05	7.15	7.25	7.35	7.40
Senegal	2.35	2.40	2.45	2.50	2.55	2.60	2.65
Sierra Leone	3.70	3.80	3.90	4.05	4.15	4.25	4.35
Togo	7.45	7.55	7.65	7.75	7.85	7.90	7.95
CENTRAL AFRICA	1.70	1.75	1.80	1.85	1.85	1.90	1.95
Burundi	1.05	1.05	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.10
Cameroon	3.20	3.40	3.55	3.75	3.95	4.20	4.35
Central African Republic	3.60	3.65	3.70	3.75	3.85	3.95	4.10
Chad	1.10	1.15	1.25	1.30	1.35	1.40	1.45
Congo	1.75	1.80	1.90	1.95	2.05	2.15	2.30
Equatorial Guinea	2.85	3.00	3.20	3.35	3.55	3.70	3.90
Gabon	2.55	2.65	2.75	2.95	3.15	3.30	3.40
Rwanda	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.70	0.70	0.75	0.80
Sao Tomé and Principe	3.80	3.90	4.05	4.15	4.30	4.40	4.55
Zaire	1.50	1.55	1.55	1.60	1.65	1.70	1.75

Table 3 (cont'd)

Subregion, country	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA	3.05	3.10	3.20	3.30	3.40	3.50	3.60
Angola	1.65	1.65	1.70	1.70	1.75	1.80	1.85
Botswana	2.10	2.20	2.45	2.60	2.80	3.00	3.20
Comoros	2.70	2.60	2.45	2.30	2.20	2.10	2.00
Djibouti	2.20	2.10	2.05	1.90	1.85	1.85	1.80
Ethiopia	6.35	6.55	6.80	7.00	7.25	7.50	7.70
Kenya	2.80	2.95	3.00	3.10	3.20	3.35	3.45
Lesotho	2.05	2.15	2.25	2.35	2.45	2.65	2.90
Madagascar	1.75	1.80	1.90	2.00	2.10	2.20	2.30
Malawi	2.35	2.50	2.70	2.85	3.05	3.20	3.40
Mauritius	13.10	13.20	13.35	13.45	13.55	13.70	13.90
Mozambique	0.80	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.90	0.90	0.90
Seychelles	7.85	8.90	10.00	11.05	12.15	13.20	14.30
Somalia	1.75	1.70	1.70	1.65	1.65	1.60	1.60
Swaziland	3.45	3.60	3.75	3.90	4.05	4.20	4.35
Tanzania, United Republic of	1.65	1.60	1.50	1.45	1.30	1.30	1.25
Uganda	2.05	2.15	2.30	2.40	2.55	2.65	2.80
Zambia	2.75	2.80	2.80	2.85	2.85	2.90	2.95
Zimbabwe	3.60	3.70	3.75	3.85	3.90	3.95	4.00
TOTAL AFRICA	5.10	5.25	5.35	5.50	5.60	5.75	5.90

Source: ECA secretariat.

3. Education and training

79. Education is a major factor in the modern economy that determines the level of participation of women in the various sectors of the economy. The modern economy demands that an individual has a certain level of education to obtain a reasonably well-paid occupation or to effectively take advantage of the various economic opportunities available. Women in Africa have been confronted with a low level of literacy which in many cases has been one of the major obstacles preventing them from participating fully in the development of their respective countries.

80. Nevertheless, over the last 10 years, there has been modest progress in the participation of female students at all levels of the school system, particularly at the primary school level. The increased enrolment of girls in primary school is largely the result of government development plans and the fact that education at the primary level is free in many countries of the region. In Botswana, for example, female students constitute over 50 per cent of the primary and junior secondary enrolments. In 1983, female

students in Botswana made up 53 per cent of the enrolment in Form III compared to 42 per cent in Form V and 40 per cent in university. 21/ In Swaziland, the ratio of girls enrolled in secondary school is equally high. In 1987, for example, 5,586 girls were enrolled in Form I as compared to 4,987 boys. 22/ However, the number of female students decreases at the higher secondary level and hence at university level because of the female dropout rate in most African countries. There are certain social and cultural factors that negatively affect female participation at higher levels of the school system, such as the increasing rate of teenage pregnancies in secondary schools and marriage which continue to contribute significantly to the high female dropout rate.

81. In the case of Botswana for example, in 1985, a total of 765 teenagers were reported to have dropped out of school, mainly due to pregnancy which alone accounted for 64 per cent of female dropouts and 52 per cent of all dropouts. 24/ Attrition rates among girls at all levels of education in Kenya have been reported to be very high. 25/ Pregnancy is one of the major factors contributing to this attrition. The high rate of female dropouts at all levels of the education system has also been observed in a recent study conducted in Sierra Leone. 26/

82. Table 4 shows the enrolment of students at the primary school level (1982-1986) while table 5 shows enrolment at the secondary level (1982-1985). As can be seen in table 4, enrolment of females in many countries in the region is close to 50 per cent while in other countries such as Botswana and Lesotho, female enrolment is more than 50 per cent of male enrolment. At the second level of education in countries such as Burkina Faso, the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Morocco and Tunisia, table 5 shows an increase of female enrolment close to 49 per cent, and even then enrolment is still low.

83. In Benin, the educational reform attaches special importance to the schooling of young girls. In this connection, a joint UNESCO/UNFPA project on "Education and its relevance to family life" is underway in schools. 27/

84. With respect to non-formal education, national literacy programmes in such African countries as Botswana, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, the Niger, Nigeria, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe have been the largest sustained adult education programmes with women being the majority of the participants. Efforts are being made to link these national literacy programmes with functional skills, income-generating activities and extension services.

85. In the area of science and technology, recent studies undertaken (in Kenya, Sierra Leone and Swaziland) on women and scientific professions have established the marginal representation of girls/women in science-based training programmes and professions. 28/ The main factors for this low representation according to the research findings are, among others:

(a) Social and cultural attitudes towards the education of girls, e.g., the belief that certain tasks are more suitable for men than for women;

Table 4. STUDENTS ENROLLED AT FIRST LEVEL OF EDUCATION
(in thousands)

Subregion, country	Males					Females				
	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
NORTH AFRICA	8,309	8,561	8,693	8,987*	9,284*	5,865*	6,134	6.278	6,492*	6,714*
Algeria	1,867	1,914	1,946	1,991*	2,035*	1,375	1,423	1,469	1,502*	1,535*
Egypt	2,949	3,094	3,248	3,401*	3,560*	2,088	2,247	2,352	2,463*	2,578*
Libyan Arab Jamahariya	380	399	417	437*	454*	342	354	369	385*	402*
Morocco	1,521	1,536	1,415	1,430*	1,447*	922	931	864	876*	887*
Sudan	936	944	971	1,001*	1,030*	643	655	675	695*	716*
Tunisia	656	674	696*	727*	758*	495	524	549	571*	596*
WEST AFRICA	11,963	11,790	11,959*	12,202*	12,457*	8,691	8,807	8,906*	9,100*	9,301*
Benin	289	287	296	296	296	139	142	148	148*	159*
Burkina Faso	145	175	198	221*	246*	92	102	115	130*	145*
Cape Verde	28	28	29*	29*	30*	27	27	28*	28*	29*
Côte d'Ivoire	673	684	713	743*	775*	462	476	496*	517*	538
Gambia	34	38	41*	46*	52*	19	23	25	28*	31*
Ghana	887	930	825	827*	834*	688	723	640	650*	655*
Guinea	167	166	193	201*	207*	81	80	91	95*	97*
Guinea-Bissau	50	50	50*	50*	50*	24	25	26*	26*	26*
Liberia	155	163	171	180*	189*	95	100	105	110*	115*
Mali	187	188	190	192*	193*	109	111	112	113*	114*
Mauritania	65	68	72	75*	79*	42	44*	46*	48*	51*
Niger	157	167	175	183*	191*	88	94	98*	103*	108*
Nigeria	8,348	8,052	8,175*	8,297*	8,420*	6,307	6,332	6,423*	6,519*	6,616*
Senegal	273	298	320	336*	353*	180	198	213	234*	255*
Sierra Leone	208	218	230	242*	255*	143	151*	160*	168*	177*
Togo	297	278	281*	284*	287*	195	179	181*	183*	185*
CENTRAL AFRICA	4,717	4,849	5,029*	5,206*	5,404*	3,550	3,696	3,866*	4,018*	4,169*
Burundi	152	180	203	211*	219*	101	121	141	146*	153*
Cameroon	878	851	891	921*	960*	699	713	744	784*	819*
Central African Republic	176	192	203	215*	228*	95	99	105	111*	117*
Chad	197	204	209	218*	229*	72	75	79	81*	84*
Congo	217	229	236	243*	253*	206	214	223	234*	243*
Equatorial Guinea	26	32	34	36*	38*	24	30	32	34*	36*
Gabon	84	87	91	94*	98*	82	85	87	90*	94*
Rwanda	386	402	407	417*	428*	361	360	375*	385*	395
Sao Tomé and Principe	8	8	8	8*	8*	8	8	8*	8*	8*
Zaire	2,593	2,664	2,747	2,843*	2,943*	1,902	1,991	2,072*	2,145*	2,220*

Table 4 (cont'd)

Subregion, country	Males					Females				
	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA	11,371	11,553	11,982*	12,477*	12,970*	9,488	9,774	10,112*	10,620*	11,011*
Angola	642	666*	697*	729*	764*	536	567*	594*	622*	651*
Botswana	88	92	99	106	113*	99	106	111	117	123*
Comoros	38*	40*	43*	44*	47*	27	28	29	31*	32*
Djibouti	12	13	14*	15*	16*	9	9	10	11*	12*
Ethiopia	1,587	1,561	1,684*	1,721*	1,814*	924	937	949*	1,054*	1,112*
Kenya	2,179	2,250	2,269	2,435	2,513	2,006	2,074	2,111	2,268	2,331
Lesotho	119	126	131	139	142	159	164	166	175	177
Madagascar	884	885	935	957	1,004	783	817	863	883	926
Malawi	502	488	515	530*	550*	367	359	384	401*	415*
Mauritius	69	68	67	71	73	68	68	67	70	71
Mozambique	712	667	694*	726*	760*	535	496	523*	548*	573*
Seychelles	7	7	7	7*	7*	7	7	7	7*	7*
Somalia	142	142	143	144*	145*	77*	79*	80*	81*	82*
Swaziland	62	64	67	70*	74*	62	64	67	70*	74*
Tanzania	1,816	1,828	1,845	1,878*	1,911*	1,697	1,725	1,772*	1,804*	1,837*
Uganda	928	964	1,009	1,057*	1,107*	689	728	762*	797*	834*
Zambia	594	632	663	693*	726*	528	562	587*	615*	643
Zimbabwe	990	1,060	1,100	1,155*	1,204*	915	984	1,030	1,066*	1,111*
TOTAL AFRICA	36,360	36,753	37,663*	38,872*	40,115*	27,594	28,411	29,162*	30,230*	31,195*

Source: ECA secretariat.

Table 5. STUDENTS ENROLLED AT SECOND LEVEL OF EDUCATION
(number)

Subregion, country	Males				Females			
	1982	1983	1984	1985	1982	1983	1984	1985
NORTH AFRICA	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Algeria	...	898,562	1,001,399*	1,128,961*	...	574,000	640,000*	722,000*
Egypt	1,890,000	1,953,000	...	...	1,199,000	1,249,000	...	...
Libyan Arab Jamahariya	199,626	...	...	...	141,000	...	...	...
Morocco	590,891	631,983	683,999	723,907	377,000	414,000	446,000	465,000
Sudan	273,814	297,981	302,698	...	182,000	209,000	219,000	...
Tunisia	221,550	238,712	253,044	274,050	134,000	149,000	166,000	184,000
WEST AFRICA	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Benin	39,804*	87,958*	85,316	...	36,881	35,926	35,266	...
Burkina Faso	21,635	23,567	28,498	35,574	10,970	12,337	15,345	17,991
Cape Verde	...	2,815*	...	...	...	1,876*	...	...
Côte d'Ivoire	171,406	176,387	186,761	...	80,720	75,030	80,040*	...
Gambia	8,639	10,028	11,111	11,172	3,785	4,402	4,802	4,746
Ghana	755,710	471,946	468,551	512,283*	273,855	281,719	282,641	313,980*
Guinea	68,880	70,433	73,964	68,261	25,968	27,286	27,157	24,493*
Guinea-Bissau	6,754	7,816	7,378	...	1,678	1,818	2,006	...
Liberia	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Mali	50,726	82,426	...	...	19,727*	20,792	...	...
Mauritania	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Niger	32,017*	33,032*	...	...	13,077*	14,156*	...	...
Nigeria	2,525,044	2,599,681*	...	...	867,142*	961,526*	...	...
Senegal	73,581	76,357	81,358	...	36,356	37,204	40,138	...
Sierra Leone	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Togo	89,302	76,902	69,106	...	29,804	25,084	21,884	...
CENTRAL AFRICA	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Burundi	13,410	14,358	15,736	...	6,507	7,066	8,248	...
Cameroon	174,580	186,643	203,854	...	99,080	109,895	124,569	...
Central African Republic	40,972	...	42,997	36,665	14,396	...	15,107	12,882
Chad	...	...	38,667	...	...	...	6,945	...
Congo	123,732	118,401	116,435	125,725	85,983	83,182	86,473	96,908
Equatorial Guinea	3,625*	...	...	...	743*	...	...	...
Gabon	19,657	21,456	...	...	13,035	14,704	...	...
Rwanda	9,082	9,764	10,852	11,898	5,148	4,997	5,691	6,235
Sao Tomé and Principe	3,593	3,668	...	...	2,303	2,436	...	...
Zaire	1,276,885	1,541,526	...	...	494,292	610,374	...	...

Table 5 (cont'd)

Subregion, country	Males				Females			
	1982	1983	1984	1985	1982	1983	1984	1985
EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA		...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Angola	...	...	...	...	55,000*	...	...	...
Botswana	...	11,441	14,000	16,981	...	14,000	17,000	19,000
Comoros	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Djibouti	3,744	4,049	4,197	4,323	2,185	2,282	...	2,718
Ethiopia	372,297	373,691	399,801	399,865	163,000	208,000	229,000	256,000
Kenya	267,435	308,108	319,893	271,068*	182,000	209,000	213,000	166,000*
Lesotho	11,162	12,327	13,422	14,372	17,000	20,000	20,000	21,000
Madagascar	...	...	318,013*	...	...	...	212,000*	...
Malawi	14,626	16,316	[illegible]	...	6,000	6,000	7,000	...
Mauritius	40,984	41,233	40,105	38,319	37,000	37,000	35,000	34,000
Mozambique	76,841	84,374	95,364	104,490	32,000	37,000	41,000	47,000
Seychelles	1,375	1,671	1,941	1,978	1,793	1,896	1,948	1,997
Somalia	43,008	41,821	...	...	20,934	21,434	...	...
Swaziland	...	...	...	...	13,000	14,000	...	...
Tanzania	51,695	53,173	54,895*	60,412*	27,000	29,000	30,000*	34,000*
Uganda	97,412	...	...	...	43,000	...	...	...
Zambia	71,273	...	...	...	39,000	...	...	...
Zimbabwe	133,852	187,397	...	...	94,000	129,000	...	...
TOTAL AFRICA	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

Source: ECA secretariat.

(b) Inadequate infrastructure and facilities (inadequately equipped science laboratories), especially in girls' schools;

(c) The streamlining into practical and non-practical subjects which occurs in many schools also prevents girls from taking subjects which provide an early introduction to the use of measuring devices, simple calculations relating to practical work, and to other laboratory manipulative skills which are essential in building confidence to tackle a subject like physics; and

(d) All three case studies reported the poor performance of girls in junior and secondary schools in science subjects, particularly in maths, physics and chemistry.

86. The above factors imply that fewer girls than boys are enrolled in science subjects. It is also implied that the majority of girls and women are cut off at an early age from a wide range of careers and interests in science-based training programmes. Many girls leaving school operate in an environment full of machinery and labour-saving devices. They should be exposed to science so that they can effectively participate in science- and technological-based activities.

87. The present approach to science education could therefore be enriched by ensuring that girls are encouraged to take science subjects and technical subjects should not be regarded as an option for the academically less gifted. In a world dominated so heavily by technology, there should be a greater integration between science and technical subjects that could produce a curriculum which ensures that girls take geometrical drawing along with other science subjects.

C. Law and legislation

88. The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women is, in essence, an international bill of rights for women. As of October 1986, 91 countries had acceded to or ratified the Convention. 29/ The Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies urge (paragraph 60) member States to sign the Convention and to take all the necessary steps to ensure that they ratify or accede to it. Table 6 below shows the number of African States that have now ratified the Convention:

Table 6. COUNTRIES RATIFYING THE CONVENTION
(position as at 1 September 1987)

Part of world	Number ratifying before 28/7/85	Number ratifying after 26/7/85	Number not ratifying
All Africa	17 (33%)	8 (16%)	26 (51%)
Rest of world	61 (51%)	8 (7%)	51 (42%)
Total world	78 (46%)	16 (7%)	77 (45%)

Source: United Nations, Human Rights: Status of International Instruments 1987.

89. Table 6 shows that 49 per cent of African States have now ratified the Convention, compared to 58 per cent in the rest of the world and that 16 per cent of the African States have ratified in the two years following the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies which may be an indication of a larger impact of the Strategies in Africa.

90. In view of the above, what is required now is the implementation of the Convention by, for example, revising some laws such as the marriage, employment and education acts, etc., to accommodate women's equality issues. Some governments are already doing this by establishing law review commissions and/or committees.

91. The Cameroon Government for instance has signed the Convention while ratification is in progress. Some legislation has been modified in the field of demography, health, education, training, employment and agriculture to adapt to the requirements for the advancement of women. However, the Government of Niger has neither signed nor ratified the Convention even though it shows a willingness to do so. 30/

92. In Botswana, a Law Reform Committee has been established to look into the law and legislation in particular as they relate to women. The Women's Guide to the Law: an outline of how the law affects every woman and her family in Botswana has also been established.

93. In general, it has been realized that the majority of women in Africa are not aware of their legal rights. In addition to establishing law review commissions and/or committees as has been done in Botswana, Ghana, Malawi, Mauritius, Nigeria, and the United Republic of Tanzania, action-oriented strategies with a view to changing the socio-economic and legal position of women need to be developed.

D. Women at the decision-making level and legislation

94. The visible and public exercise of power by women is controversial in many societies. In most African countries, very few women are in politics. Political participation is a key issue for women because it is an indicator of their status as well as a tool to improve their condition in society. In many African countries, women have the right to vote and they do vote; the mere act of voting, however, cannot be regarded as a measure of political consciousness or participation. In many instances, poor rural and urban women are mobilized during political campaigns to vote. In such situations, women vote in high numbers but they do not participate in any other political activities in particular at the decision-making level.

95. Although there has been an increase in the number of women entering the arena of decision-making and power, their success has, however not been easy. They had and still have to struggle against considerable odds in order to succeed in politics as well as getting into key positions in the government, parastatal organizations and institutions. There are still very few women in those areas of activity to which access is, in most cases, restricted to those who hold higher academic qualifications. This situation has limited and continues to limit women's access to economic, social and political power. Thus, for instance, it is still very difficult for women to gain a foothold in those professions which bestow recognition and influence, especially when they are financially highly rewarding.

96. According to the information received from Gabon, Kenya, Madagascar, the Niger, Senegal, Swaziland, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda, politically, women are represented in various organs and committees from the village/district level to the central government level. Besides their participation in political parties, committees, etc., more and more women are being appointed to key positions both in the public and private sectors. In Senegal, for example, women participate in all levels of decision-making: governmental, parliamentary, diplomatic and community. 31/

97. In the United Republic of Tanzania, for example, in the general election of 1985, 25 out of 244 seats were filled by women members of parliament. In order to encourage women to exercise their political rights and to enlighten the general mass on the importance of involving women in politics, the Party and Government decided to reserve 15 parliamentary seats for women. 32/ In Madagascar, a good number of women occupy key positions at the decision-making level in legislative bodies as well as in elective posts. 33/

98. Between 1981 and 1987, the mayor of the economic capital of Gabon was a woman. In addition, 6.25 per cent of the permanent secretaries, 9.4 per cent directors, 10 per cent of the first secretaries in embassies, 12.5 per cent of the district attorneys. 34/ Further details on women in decision-making bodies and in positions of responsibility in Gabon is presented in table 7.

99. In general, although the number of women in high positions and at the decision-making level has increased, the situation is still very unsatisfactory. Table 7 gives a summary of the number of women in key positions in the countries for which information was available.

V. PROBLEMS/CONSTRAINTS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

A. Problems/constraints

100. Based on the ATRCW missions undertaken and information received from various countries, problems and constraints such as structure, policy measures, human and financial resources, information/data have been observed.

(a) Structure

101. Structure is one of the major problems faced by WID programmes. Structural problems are seen in terms of the location of women's affairs units in ministries. In most cases, national machineries are not located at a high central position within the government bureaucracy and are inadequately financed and usually understaffed.

(b) Policy measures

102. Many countries have not yet adopted a national policy on women in development which is necessary for action towards enhancing the participation of women in national development.

Table 7. WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS IN DIFFERENT PUBLIC SERVICE SECTORS

Country	Minister/ Deputy Ministers	Diplomat/ Ambassadors	Perm.Sec Deputy Perm Sec	Commis-sioners	Director/ Deputy Directors and Managers	Judges Magistrates	Members of Parliament
Botswana (1987)	1		1 Deputy			2	
Gabon	5 Deputies	1			1		25 National Assembly 75 Regional Assemblies
Madagascar	1				1		1
Niger	1				3		
Senegal	3			1	9 pub.sec. 4 priv.sec.		18 2 Vice Chair Women
Swaziland (1986)				4 Under-Sec.	190 priv. sector 1025 pub. sector		4
Tanzania	4 1 Deputy	1	1	3	3		25
Uganda	2 3 Deputies	3	2 6 Under-Sec.	1	26 priv. & Para-statal sec.	2 4 Chief Magistrates	2

Source: Responses received from the countries on the ECA questionnaire and other communications.

(c) Information data

103. There is lack of data on women on which to assess the participation of women and in their contribution to national development. Accordingly, the available data is not disaggregated. For purposes of influencing planning on gender issues, the statistical data base and information systems are important entry points. Gender disaggregated data and analysis based on their information gives a concrete and objective basis for advocating gender responsiveness in planning.

B. Suggestions/recommendations

104. Based on the problems and constraints outlined above and within the context of this paper, the following suggestions are advanced for governments and agencies concerned and involved in WID considerations:

(a) Education and training

(i) attrition rates among girls at all levels of education are very high with pregnancy as a major contributing factor. There is a need for government policy and programmes to rehabilitate young unmarried school girls;

(ii) access to science- and technology-based training programmes should be provided for girls;

(b) Structural adjustment programmes

(i) measures to reduce the negative effects of adjustment on women and policies which can compensate its adverse impact are needed. For instance in employment, jobs (e.g., in the services) where women predominate should be protected and maintained;

(ii) government should ensure the participation of national machinery in the early stages of policy formulation and implementation;

(c) Employment

(i) improvement programmes for women in the informal sector should be developed emphasizing reconstruction of physical facilities for the improvement of the work environment and access to productive facilities such as credit, marketing and training;

(d) Agriculture

Governments and agencies should consider enhancing the role of women in agriculture by providing:

(i) appropriate labour and time-saving devices to cater for all agricultural activities such as ploughing, weeding, harvesting, transporting, preserving and processing of food;

(ii) access to land and training in agricultural extension work;

(iii) farm implements, fertilizers, high-quality seeds and agricultural extension services in order to improve the input/output ratio;

(e) Health and nutrition

Governments should increase the level of participation of women during policy formulation of family health programmes as they are the key implementors and beneficiaries of these policies;

(f) Women at the decision-making level

(i) leadership training programmes to prepare women for taking up political responsibilities in position of high standing should be organized and provided for. Placing women in the mainstream of development should be a major objective of the government;

(ii) there is a need for increasing the representation of women in local level development committees as well as equipping them to effectively influence decisions;

(g) National policy on women in development

Women's visibility in national development plans should be a priority. Hence, national development strategies should be developed taking into consideration clearly structured production systems, allocation of national resources to basic production sectors, and policy of action aimed at involving women in national planning exercises;

(h) Data/information

Not enough information and data on the situation of women is available in most countries. In this regard, the following need to be considered:

(i) national central statistical offices should carry out a survey to assess women's contribution to national development;

(ii) national machineries should work in close collaboration with professional men and women in the mass media (radio and television) to sensitize the WID concept and dissemination of information on WID;

(iii) national machineries should develop information networks with government ministries, training and research institutes and non-governmental organizations;

(iv) research on gender issues should be undertaken and findings disseminated to users;

(v) national machineries should develop a mechanism for monitoring, reviewing and appraising the implementation of the Strategies;

(vi) development of a data bank on WID at the national level should be given priority consideration; and

(vii) statistical offices and other structures should be strengthened so that they can collect and analyse gender disaggregated data with policy and planning implications.

C. Conclusions

105. Since 1985 and within the framework of the Strategies, some social and economic changes in favour of women in most countries in Africa have been to some extent apparent in different sectors. Governments have increasingly recognized the significant contribution of women to national development as evidenced by the efforts made by some to strengthen the women's national machineries and/or women's affairs units in the ministries in which they are located. Zimbabwe and Uganda for example have created ministries in charge of women's affairs.

106. The implementation of the Strategies, however, has been slow because of various factors such as financial and human resources, lack of national policy and commitments by some governments to WID programmes.

107. Nevertheless, even if it is an exceedingly slow process, changes have occurred in various spheres of development. In the employment sector, there is an undeniable tendency for women to move into the professional categories which were, until only recently, occupied almost exclusively by men. In education and training, there have been an increase of girls' enrolment at all levels of the education system. For instance, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland are reported to have the highest female enrolment at both primary and secondary levels in Africa. However, one setback for girls is their low enrolment in science-based training programmes.

108. At the decision-making level, Gabon, Mauritius, Senegal, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda have introduced measures to increase the participation of women in key responsible positions both in the public and private sectors. The situation, however, is still unsatisfactory.

109. Much indeed still remains to be done, but the essential thing is that governments have to make crucial commitments if they are to effectively implement the Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the year 2000 and to ensure the changing socio-economic conditions of women.

FOOTNOTES

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9/ Swaziland response to ECA/ATRCW questionnaire, August 1988.

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11/ Cameroon response to ECA/ATRCW questionnaire, June 1988.

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28/ It's Our Move Now, a community action guide to the United Nations Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, International Women's Tribune Centre, New York, September 1987.

29/ Niger response to ECA/ATRCW questionnaire.

30/ ECA/MULPOC/NIA/87/V/WD, March 1987.

31/ Tanzania response to ECA/ATRCW questionnaire.

32/ Madagascar response to ECA/ATRCW questionnaire.

33/ Gabon response to ECA/ATRCW questionnaire.